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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the traits of fictional characters and discusses how their characteristics have influenced modern conceptions of leadership. Based on E.D. Hirsch's study of cultural literacy and the idea that cultural knowledge is essential to the right functioning of a society, the report evaluates 29 famous figures (28 male, 1 female) and the leadership traits they portray in the writings of various authors at different time periods. Each character was ranked according to his or her capacity (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility), achievement (scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishment), responsibility (dependability, initiative, persistence), participation (activity, sociability, cooperativeness), status (socioeconomic position, popularity), and situation (mental level, status, skills). The review showed that leadership qualities, as identified by numerous studies, represented few cultural perspectives. In fact, cultural literacy has attempted to define the culture of a productive, responsible citizen without the assumptions of varying cultural identities. The characters often represented stereotypes that culturally literate leaders would recognize and use in common context. An appreciation of leadership requires an understanding of the participating practices that have been legitimized. It also demands an understanding of entrenched traditions accepted by both leaders and subordinates about the "leadership principle." (Contains 20 references.) (RJM)

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Introduction

The study of leadership in public and educational administration has been significantly affected by Barnard's (1938) classic work The Functions of the Executive, wherein he portrayed the leader as "...providing technical and moral competence". Since leadership is considered central to organizational effectiveness, research has concentrated upon finding the correlates of effective leadership.

Our understanding of leadership has focused on our common beliefs about leaders. Our culture had described the best leaders as philosophical in the sense that they possess a comprehensive vision, the capacity for flexible, inventive thinking, and the ability to make decisions and act in an ambiguous and uncertain environment. Effective leaders maintained an awareness of details, of complex interpersonal dimensions, and of political and ethical realities that characterize human behavior within the scope of a particular organizational configuration. The use of classical literature to prepare executives, supervisors and managers, particularly as educational leaders, to become reflective realists, and to master the increasingly complex interpersonal, social, political, and ethical dynamics of the contemporary work place, specifically, the school systems, has required the rethinking of leadership preparation (MIT, 1991).

Leadership

Definitions

No human group currently studied has survived without some form of leadership—even in the basic interactions. A leader was required. Linguists and anthropologists asserted that leadership has been a function of language usage (Farb, 1975), in particular, verbal communications within a group. Written language usage, specifically literature, has portrayed human interactions in a variety of cultures.

Stodgill's Handbook on Leadership (Bass, B.M., 1990) has remained the authoritative analysis of leadership studies and is organized as a review of thousands of abstracts of research. These research projects have defined leadership for the scope of a particular research project and yet, the review by Stodgill clearly defined commonalities within the research.

Stodgill's (1990) handbook suggested that leadership has been defined differently by each of the researchers who have attempted to study the concept. The handbook

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organized the definitions of leadership as follows: Leadership as a Focus of Group Processes; Leadership as Personality and its Effects; Leadership as the Art of Inducing Compliance; Leadership as the Exercise of Influence; Leadership as Act or Behavior; Leadership as a Form of Persuasion; Leadership as a Power Relation; Leadership as an Instrument of Goal Achievement; Leadership as an Emerging Effect of Interaction; Leadership as a Differentiated Role; Leadership as the Initiation of Structure.

Further, researchers have attempted to classify leaders. Plato's Republic offered three types of leaders (the statesman, the military commander, the businessman) and subsequent classification have focused on perspectives in education, politics, and the military. Leaders were also classified with socio-psychological specifications (e.g. dynamic, psychoanalytic, genetic, etc.). Early theories of leadership included the following: Great Man theories; trait theories; environmental theories; personal-situational theories; psychoanalytic theories; interaction-expectation theories; humanistic theories; behavioral theories.

This discussion will focus on trait theories as the basis for the review of literary characters. The evaluation of fictional characters and the leadership traits evidenced in the writings of varied authors at varied time periods was chosen based on the premise that "art imitates life". Also, there has been a great deal of evidence which suggested that those individuals with knowledge or superior intelligence were perceived as leaders within group dynamics (Cox, 1926; McCuen, 1929; Korman, 1968; Porter & Ghiselli, 1957; Randle, 1956).

Cultural Literacy

Finally, this review of fictional characters was based on Hirsch's comprehensive study of cultural literacy. A 1980 sociologist Orlando Patterson address expanded Hirsch's ideas as follows:

> Industrialized civilization (imposes) a growing cultural and structural complexity which requires persons to have a broad grasp of what Hirsch has called cultural literacy: a deep understanding of mainstream culture, which no longer has much to do with white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, but with the imperatives of industrial civilization. It is the need for cultural literacy, a profound conception of the whole civilization, which is often neglected in talk about literacy.

Patterson (1980) continued by drawing a connection between background information and the ability to hold positions of responsibility and power. The people who run society at the macro-level must be literate in this culture.

This analysis was made of the fictional characters listed in the original project. The list of items in the original project was subdivided into categories and all references to adult, human fictional characters comprised the subset of this inquiry. Juvenile and fantasy characters were not included in the discussion. This subset was narrowed to twenty-nine literary characters. These characters and those traits which identified them as representative of the subset were analyzed. Trait information, listed in Table 1 was

derived from the Dictionary of Cultural Literacy (1988), a subsequent reference work designed to complement the original work.

According to Stodgill's review (1990), conclusions which were supported by several studies included the following traits. Leaders exceeded other members of the group in intelligence, scholarship, dependability, participation, and socioeconomic status. Specifically, they exhibited these traits: sociability; initiative; persistence; knowing how to get things done; self-confidence; alertness to and insight into situations; cooperativeness; popularity; adaptability; and verbal facility. Those traits which correlated highest with leadership were originality, popularity, sociability, judgment, aggressiveness, desire to excel, humor, cooperativeness, liveliness, and athletic ability (listed in order of magnitude of average correlation coefficient).

From the survey, Stodgill (1990) classified these traits under the following general headings which shall be referred to in the discussion of literary leaders:

1) capacity (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, judgment)
2) achievement (scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishment)
3) responsibility (dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, desire to excel)
4) participation (activity, sociability, cooperativeness, adaptability, humor)
5) status (socioeconomic position, popularity)
6) situation (mental level, status, skills, needs and interests of followers, objectives to be achieved).

After identifying the subset of characters, Table 1 listed the characters and, using the annotations found in the Dictionary of Cultural Literacy (1988), each adjective (descriptor) was listed. The general trait characteristics which have been used in the majority of the research on leadership, specifically, the six categories listed in the preceding paragraph were used to develop a cross index (see Table 2). This cross index was used to rate the five areas portrayed by the character. The index rating system was completed using the following scale: 1-Rarely attributed to character; 2-Seldom attributed to character; 3-Attributed to character; 4-Often attributed to character; 5-Always attributed to character. The rating system was completed by a panel of experts.

In the review of the data in Table 2, the most obvious intervening variable was that some characters, such as King Arthur, were notable in several literary works. Others were specific to one literary work (Example: Babbitt). Also, each trait characteristic required a forced choice of 1 to 5 on limited information about the character. Most characters represented protagonists or antagonists within a literary context and may have been drawn specifically as stereotypes. The fifth trait category, Status, was the mode. Most characters, then, represented higher status individuals as a result of birth or wealth.

A smaller set of characters represented morals or values within a culture and were not noted for a specific leadership trait. Two of the characters had a maximum range of 3 and were noted as level 3 in Category 3 (Responsibility) as a result of traits such as persistence and aggressiveness without value attached to those traits. Another set of

characters were those which represented ethnic minorities within the majority culture defined by the literary context. A final set, actually one individual, represented women. Her highest rated attribute was status, similar to the set in general.

Table 3 summarized the attributes of each of the twenty-nine characters. It indicated that the attribute Status had the highest mean of the six categories, as well as the largest standard deviation. The attribute characterized as Participation had the lowest mean, and the lowest standard deviation. Clearly, the literary intent of the varied authors had not focused on the development of characters which represented true leaders within a literary framework.

The clearest deduction of Hirsch's inclusion of representative literary characters can not be considered as models for the managers of a macro-society. The intent remained that the culture represented by this foundation, i.e., an understanding of the characters as symbols and the ability to see analogies of behavior formed the basis for discussions of traits relevant to decision-making.

Leaders' perceptions, attributes, cognition, and opinions will continue to be of considerable research importance as a link to what the leader actually does. It would appear from the scheme developed that value positive leadership is not a significant domain in literary works identified within the scope of cultural literacy. However, it would appear from the review of the list of characters that symbols have developed from this set which would require a literate understanding of literature as well as the ability to think creatively in the management arena.

One cannot understand leadership in a vacuum. An appreciation of leadership in a modern world requires an understanding of what kinds of participating practices have been legitimized. However, it also requires an understanding of firmly entrenched traditions accepted by both leaders and subordinates about the "leadership principle". Finally, it requires an awareness of cultural patterns of leadership.

This review revealed that leadership qualities represented few cultural perspectives and, in fact, cultural literacy has attempted to define the culture of a productive, responsible, citizen without the assumptions of varying cultural identities. The preponderance of evidence has endorsed the need by minority members serving as leaders in majority environments to emulate the original white, male manager. It has also defined leadership behavior for community leaders who need to identify more strongly with their own subculture than do their followers.

Summary

Although there were characters in literature which may have framed a discussion of leadership and interactions among groups, there also appeared to be a subset of literary characters which represented attributes which may have interplayed in administrative application, e.g. Scrooge, Willy Lohman, etc. Drawing on Patterson's analogies of Hirsch's original work, e.g. "people who run society at the macro-level must be literate in

the culture," the analysis of fictional trait characteristics was appropriate as the basis for literate interpretations within the scope of analogous references. The review of the characteristics of the literary character in the subset has required a restructuring of the initial project and a review of its intent. The subset of characters which formed the focus of this inquiry did not represent individuals who were necessarily, within the context of the literary form, leaders. The characters often represented stereotypes which leaders who were culturally literate would recognize and use in common context.

A study of historically represented leaders (Churchill, Hitler, etc.) and the trait scheme used for this project would be a natural follow-up since the subset could be defined as individuals known as leaders. The use of trait characteristics and the basis for definition of origin of traits assigned to specific historical leaders would be a potential problem.

For the coming century, Pascarella & Cook (1978) have forecasted that a premium will be placed on middle managers' abilities to deal with the human factor. More statesmanship will be required of top managers. The social forces driving educational administration into the twenty-first century are, likely, the same for leaders in all aspects of human interactions, e.g. demography, economy, technology, and ethics (Yates, 1987a; 1987b). Societal trends impacting educational leaders of the 21st century appear to be 1) rapid proportional shifting of racial groups; 2) increasing representation of linguistically different groups; 3) decreased numbers of intact families (Scribner, 1991).

In order for school administrators to lead under these conditions, they must be prepared to initiate efforts to monitor these forces. Scribner (1991) noted that "the field" needed, in part, to evaluate common themes, to analyze without isolation. He further reiterated Clark's (1989) assertion to "Seizing the Initiative" familiar to the culturally literate thinker as carpe diem (seizing the day) and in his conclusions he challenged leaders to be prepared for the time to "think like the hedgehog and..." a time to think like a fox", lines borrowed from Isaiah Berlin's (1953) adaptation of the Greek poet Archiloschus's poetry which stated that "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing."

Table 1

Arthur:	King; chivalrous; warrior; once and future king; brave; wise
Ahab:	Captain; mad; obsessive
Babbitt:	crass; narrow; loud; overoptimistic; boor; materialistic businessman
Brutus:	honorable; noblest Roman of them all; assassin
Casey at the Bat:	arrogant; over-confident; athletic
Casey Jones:	hero; valiant
Copperfield, David:	hardworking, tenacious
Crane, Icabod	
Crusoe, Robinson:	shipwrecked sailor; resourceful; ingenious; energetic
Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde:	well-intentioned; cruel; sadistic; good; evil
Dracula:	exotic; evil
Gantry, Elmer:	successful preacher; insincere; clever
Fagin:	villain; unscrupulous; miserly; thief
Falstaff:	endearing; fat; aging rogue; coward who brags; jolly
Friday:	native; valued helper
Gatsby, Jay:	millionaire; schemer; aloof; mysterious
Hamlet:	Prince; scholar; thoughtful nature
Holmes, Sherlock:	shrewd; extraordinary powers of memory; deduction; and obs
Legree, Simon:	cruel overseer; vicious
Lohman, Willy:	salesman; useless
Macbeth:	nobleman; murderer
Merlin:	magician; advisor
Mohican/Unkus:	noble American Indian
O'Hara, Scarlett:	shrew; manipulative; heroine; southern belle
Othello:	general; Moor
Robin Hood:	thief
Scrooge, Ebenezer:	mean-spirited person; miserly
Tarzan:	English nobleman; resourceful; athletic
Uncle Tom:	virtuous; pious; passive; slave

Table 2

	Capacity	Achieve	Resp.	Part	Status	Situation
Arthur, King	3	4	5	4	5	5
Babbitt	1	1	2	1	5	3
Brutus	5	5	4	4	5	4
Captain Ahab	1	2	3	1	5	3
Crusoe, Robinson	5	4	4	1	1	5
Casey at the Bat	1	5	3	1	5	3
Casey Jones	1	1	5	1	1	5
David Copperfield	3	3	5	3	3	3
Crane, Icabod	1	3	3	3	4	1
Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde	5	4	1	1	5	3
Dracula	4	1	1	1	5	1
Fagin	3	1	3	1	1	4
Falstaff	1	1	1	4	3	1
Friday	3	3	4	2	1	3
Gantry, Elmer	3	3	4	4	5	4
Gatsby, Jay	4	3	3	1	5	3
Hamlet	4	4	2	1	5	4
Holmes, Sherlock	5	5	5	3	5	5
Legree, Simon	1	1	3	1	2	2
Loman, Willy	1	1	3	2	1	1
Macbeth	3	1	2	1	5	1
Merlin	5	5	1	1	3	3
Mochian-Unkus	4	3	3	2	5	4
O'Hara, Scarlett	4	4	5	2	4	4
Othello	3	1	1	1	5	3
Robin Hood	4	4	5	4	5	4
Scrooge	3	1	3	1	4	1
Tarzan	3	5	5	4	5	3
Uncle Tom	1	1	5	1	1	1

CAPACITY: intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, judgment
ACHIEVEMENT: scholarship, knowledge, athletic accomplishment
RESPONSIBILITY: dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence
PARTICIPATION: activity, sociability, cooperativeness, adaptability, humor
STATUS: socioeconomic position, popularity
SITUATION: mental level, skills, needs and interests of followers, objectives to be attained

1-Rarely attributed; 2-Seldom attributed; 3-Attributed; 4-Often attributed; 5-Always attributed

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Table 3

ATTRIBUTE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Capacity	2.93	1.46
Achievement	2.76	1.55
Responsibility	3.24	1.41
Participation	1.97	1.22
Status	3.76	1.61
Situation	3.00	1.34
Grand Total	2.94	1.53

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